

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9290

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 3348

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: EAID, PEPR, PINT, SHUM, HA, US

SUBJECT: COMMENT ON "A DIFFERENT VIEW ON U.S. POLICY TOWARDS
HAITI BY TWO DEPARTING OFFICERS"

REF: PORT AU PRINCE A-50

1. SUMMARY: IN THEIR BELIEFS (1) THAT WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. AID
WOULD DESTABLIZE THE DUVALIER REGIME TO THE POINT OF OVERTHROW,
AND (2) THAT A SUCCESSOR REGIME WOULD POSSIBLY BE PROGRESSIVE,
MESSRS. GOMEZ' AND IRONS' VIEWS DIVERGE FROM THE REALITIES
OF BOTH HAITIAN HISTORY AND THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF POWER.
THEIR POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS CONSEQUENTLY WOULD STAND A GOOD CHANCE
OF PRECIPITATING A RETURN TO REPRESSION AND AN END TO ANY HOPES
FOR DEVELOPMENT. MEANWHILE, NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE ON THE TITLE
II PROGRAM--"THE TOUGHEST, MOST AMBITIOUS U.S. AID PACKAGE
EVER PRESENTED TO THE GOH, AND ONE WHICH FOCUSES SQUARELY ON
ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN HAITI'S DEVELOPMENT
EQUATION TODAY: CORRUPTION" (THEIR WORDS). END SUMMARY.

2. INTRODUCTION. FOLLOWING IS COUNTRY TEAM MESSAGE COMMENTING
ON MEMO TRANSMITTED BY PORT-AU-PRINCE A-50. COUNTRY TEAM
COMMENT IS CLASSIFIED SECRET IN VIEW OF ITS SENSITIVITY. WE
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BELIEVE A-50 AND ACCOMPANYING GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO SHOULD BE
UPGRADED FROM CONFIDENTIAL TO SECRET FOR SAME REASON.

3. THE GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO PROPOUNDS A MAJOR POLICY SHIFT--
PRESSURING THE HAITIAN GOVERNMENT TO THE POINT OF OVERTHROW
TO ACHIEVE U.S. GOALS--WITH WHICH WE DO NOT AGREE. IT ALSO
PROPOUNDS A SUBORDINATE TACTIC--USING OUR TITLE III PL 480

PROPOSAL AS A MEANS TO TEST THE GOH COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS CURRENT MISSION POLICY.

4. THE BASIC U.S. OBJECTIVES FOR HAITI ARE A) TO HELP ALLEVIATE ITS GREAT POVERTY B) IN THE PROCESS, TO GET IT ON THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT AND C) TO CREATE OUT OF THIS DEVELOPMENT THE BASES FOR DESIRED POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM. THE PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS POLICY ARE LIMITED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY BACKWARDNESS OF THE COUNTRY, ITS PEOPLE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS; THE COUNTRY'S DISMAL HISTORY SINCE INDEPENDENCE; THE DEPTH TO WHICH ITS PEOPLE ARE MIRED IN POVERTY; AND GREAT SENSITIVITY TOWARDS EXTERNAL PRESSURE (PARTICULARLY FROM THE U.S.). EVEN WITH THE BEST WILL IN THE WORLD ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER CHANGE AGENTS, PROGRESS IS LIKELY TO BE SLOW.

5. CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION CREATED BY THE GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED MEASURABLY SINCE 1971, AS IS ATTESTED TO BY THE RETURN OF HUNDREDS AND POSSIBLY THOUSANDS OF HAITIANS AFTER LONG EXILE. MOREOVER, THERE ARE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT. WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS:
--ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED.
-- A SYSTEM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ACCOUNT FOR THOSE WHO DISAPPEARED DURING THE FRANCOIS DUVALIER REGIME. WHEN RECENTLY TESTED, IT WORKED.

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--THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, WHILE UNDENIABLY WEAK, HAS BEEN REI-FORCED BY THE RESUMPTION OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL TRIALS.
--ABUSES OF POWER BY THE MILITARY AND PRAAMILITARY FORCES ARE NOTABLY FEWER.
--THERE IS GREATER TOLERANCE OF DISSENT.
--VISITS HAVE BEEN MADE OR PLANNED BY THE INTERAMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION AND THE INTERAMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.
--WITH RESPECT TO THE ECONOMY:
--PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYMENT-INTENSIVE INDUSTRY HAS CREATED 30,000 NEW JOBS.
UNPRECEDENTEDLY HIGH LEVELS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, IMPORTANTLY A REFLECTION OF UNPRECEDNTED BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AID.
--TOURISM HAS PICKED UP.
--THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IS BOOMING.
--THE GOVERNMENT HAS PUBLICLY COMMITTED ITSELF TO MAJOR FISCAL REFORMS.

6. THIS IS NOT SAY THAT MOST HAITIANS ARE MUCH BETTER OFF THAN THERE WERE SEVEN YEARS AGO. BUT THEN WAS NO HOPE. THERE IS SOME HOPE TODAY.

7. DESTABILIZATION POLICY. WE CONSIDER THE PROPOSED POLICY OF MASSIVE PRESSURE (DRASTIC REDUCTION OF ASSISTANCE) TO EFFECT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AS IMPRACTICAL IN GENERAL AND MOST LIKELY TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE IN THE CASE OF HAITI.

8. THE U.S. ESSENTIALLY FOLLOWED THIS TACTIC IN 1963. CUTTING OFF ASSISTANCE THEN, AT A TIME WHEN OUR INFLUENCE IN HAITI WAS GREATER THAN NOW, DID NOT AMELIORATE CONDITIONS NOR LEAD TO THE OVERTHROW OF THE GOVERNMENT EVEN THOUGH IT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PERIODIC EFFORTS OF HAITIAN EXILE GROUPS TO BRING DOWN THE DUVALIER REGIME. INDEED, IT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE REGIME'S PURSUIT OF EVEN HARSHER POLICIES.

9. FIFTEEN YEARS LATER THE U.S. IS NOT LONGER PREEMINENT IN
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HAITI, THERE ARE ANUMBER OF COUNTRIES FOLLOWING INDEPENDINT POLICIES TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE RELATIVE MAGNITUDE OF OUR ASSISTANCE VIS-A-VIS THE ASSISTANCE OF OTHER DONORS HAS DIMINISHED. JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER IS NO IN POWER AND IS CONSIDERABLY MORE POPULAR THAN HIS FATHER WAS IN 1963; THE SECURITY FORCES--THE ULTIMATE ARBITERS OF POWER--APPEAR TO BE SOLIDLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT; THE OPPOSITION IS FAR MORE AMORPHOUS AND NARROWER THAN DEPICTED IN THE GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO; AND THE PRESIDENT DOES ENJOY BROAD SUPPORT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE "DESTABLIZING" POLICY URGED IN THE GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO WOULD PROBABLY WORK AGAINST U.S. OBJECTIVES IN HAITI.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT AU PRINCE 3348

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10. THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES TO CUTTING OFF U.S. ASSISTANCE, DEPENDING IN PART ON WHETHER OTHER DONORS AND PRIVATE INVESTORS WOULD FOLLOW THE U.S. LEAD AND, IF SO, THE EXTENT THEY DID SO. THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF APPARENT PROBABILITY:

--JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER WOULD DRAW ON HIS MILITARY FORCES TO STABILIZE HIS REGIME, REVERTING TO HIS FATHER'S REPRESSIVE POLICY IF NECESSARY.

--A HARD LINE MILITARY OR CIVILIAN DICTATOR COULD REPLACE JEAN-CLAUDE, ENDING ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT.

--A MORE "PROGRESSIVE" LEADER MIGHT EMERGE WHO, LIKE PAPA DOC (WIDELY CONSIDERED IN 1957 AS PRO-U.S., A MODERN AND HUMANITARIAN REFORMER), WOULD TURN OUT TO BE ANYTHING BUT PROGRESSIVE.

--A REFORMER MIGHT REPLACE DUVALIER, EMASCULATE THE SECURITY FORCES, GALVANIZE THE ENLIGHTENED ELEMENTS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, PURSUE A VIGOROUS AND SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, AND SET UP FREE ELECTIONS. (HAITIAN HISTORY AS WELL AS AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT POWER STRUCTURE SUGGEST THAT THE ODDS AGAINST THIS HAPPENING ARE ASTRONOMICAL.)

11. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE LATTER ALTERNATIVE, THESE SCENARIOS COULD REVIVE EXILE ATTEMPTS TO INVADE OR INFILTRATE HAITI, WITH ATTENDANT BLOODSHED AND REPRESSION. THEY WOULD END
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U.S. INFLUENCE ON THE GOVERNMENT. THEY WOULD ABORT THE LIBERALIZATION POLICY, THREATEN ACHIEVEMENTS ATTAINED, AND ENGENDER RESISTANCE TO FURTHER CHANGE. THEY COULD ALSO PROMOTE SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN DISINVESTMENT.

12. TITLE III. WITH RESPECT TO THE TITLE III PROGRAM, THE GOME/IRONS MEMO IS BOTH HIGHLY LAUDATORY (SEE THE QUOTE IN THE SUMMARY) AND ECHOES EXISTING POLICY, VIZ. THAT OUR TITLE III PL480 PROPOSAL SHOULD BE USED AS A MEANS TO TEST THE COMMITMENT OF THE GOH TO DEVELOPMENT. WE ARE NO LESS SUSPICIOUS OF THE MOTIVATIONS AND INTENTIONS OF THE REACTIONARIES AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO RIGOROUS NEGOTIATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT OF A TITLE III PROGRAM.

13. BUT WE DO NOT REGARD THE TITLE III PROPOSAL ONLY AS A TEST. WE CONSIDER IT TO BE A POTENTIALLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO ENCOURAGE THE GOH TO CONTINUE MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF OUR POLICY GOALS. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN MEASURABLE CHANGES IN HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IN THE PAST FEW YEARS IN RESPONSE TO OUR RENEWED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES. WE HAVE IDENTIFIED BROAD DEVELOPMENT POLICY

REFORMS, IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHER DONORS, WHICH HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED IN THE TITLE III PROPOSAL. THE PRESSURES WE HAVE SO FAR EXERTED ON THE GOH STAND A FAIR CHANCE, WE THINK, OF LEADING TO FURTHER REFORMS EVEN THOUGH THEY WILL CONTINUE TO COME SLOWER THAN WE WOULD WISH.

14. AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, THE GOH HAS NOT FAILED THE TEST. WE ARE STILL IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOH ON THE TITLE III PROPOSAL. THE GOH, IN FACT, ACCEPTED A MAJOR PART OF THE TITLE III PACKAGE AT THE JULY JOINT COMMISSION MEETING WHEN IT COMMITTED ITSELF TO SWEEPING FISCAL REFORM. WE ARE NEGOTIATING NOW FOR THE OTHER PROPOSALS INCORPORATED IN OUR SECRET

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TITLE III PACKAGE. ONLY IF THE GOH REJECTS THE TITLE III PACKAGE, OR RENEGES ON ITS PROMISED REFORMS WOULD THE QUESTION OF THE APPROPRIATE U.S. REACTION COME INTO PLAY.

15. WE AGREE WITH THE GOMEZ/IRONS MEMO THAT SHOULD THE GOH REJECT THE TITLE III PROPOSAL, OR FAIL TO CARRY OUT REFORMS AFTER HAVING MADE A COMMITMENT TO THEM, THE U.S. SHOULD REACT SHARPLY. HOW WE REACTED WOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT IN PRINCIPLE WE WOULD WANT TO TAKE ACTION THAT WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE GOH WHILE STILL MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO WORK WITH THE OTHER DONORS IN A SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT EFFORT TO ACHIEVE LONG TERM U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES. FOR NOW, HOWEVER, OUR MAJOR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE IS TO MOVE THE GOH TOWARDS FULL ACCEPTANCE AND EXECUTION OF THE TITLE III PACKAGE. MEADE

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